

**FIRST SELECTMAN TIMOTHY M. HERBST  
EULOGY FOR BOARD OF FINANCE CHAIRMAN WILLIAM A. CROOKS, JR.  
ST. TERESA'S CHURCH  
FEBRUARY 14, 2011**

Good morning:

Dolores, words cannot begin to describe the sorrow the Town of Trumbull and its people feel for you today. We feel it for your three wonderful daughters, Lori, Susan and Kerry, your dedicated son-in-laws and your five wonderful grandchildren.

Perhaps it is fate or even divine providence that today, Bill Crooks will be laid to rest on February 14<sup>th</sup>, Valentine's Day, a day where we celebrate love and compassion.

Bill Crooks loved so many things and showed compassion for so many people.

Nothing was more important to Bill than his family and nothing made him happier than to see his family on the holidays or watch his grandchildren in their many activities.

Bill loved his friends and showed compassion for them every day.

Bill loved the University of Michigan. He loved his four years in Ann Arbor. When he left, he continued to root for his alma mater. The Wolverines have lost their most dedicated fan. I will miss hearing Bill say his two favorite words, "GO BLUE".

Bill had a lot of hobbies that he loved as well. He loved Jai alai and he loved going to the Casino. In fact, Bill taught me how to play Black Jack. He often joked that he made so many frequent trips to Mohegan Sun that instead of a summer home, he owned a few tee pees, courtesy of his generous investments to the Indians of Eastern Connecticut.

He loved being a member of the Elks Club where he would often hold court with his best friend, Jerry McDougall.

He loved getting together with other dedicated fans every weekend to watch Laurel and Hardy in Black Rock, a testament to how much he loved a good laugh.

Bill loved his work. He showed that love by being a profound advocate for the school district. He was honest and dedicated in how he approached his job as an accountant and the school system's business administrator. He always produced an honest budget and he always placed the well-being of the Town, the school system and the children of Trumbull first and foremost. Bill knew every principal, teacher, custodian and cafeteria worker and they all respected him.

Bill showed compassion for the children of Trumbull by being the biggest and best cheerleader for the Town's athletic programs. I cannot think of one Trumbull High School football game I was at, either as a player or a spectator, when Bill was not there in the stands to cheer on the Golden Eagles.

Over the last week, all through Trumbull have we heard the hosannas to Bill's decency, his modesty, his generosity, his humor, his commitment to his family and his commitment to his community. We always knew how much Bill loved Trumbull. Over the course of the last week have we truly learned how much Trumbull loved him. Despite all of the positions and offices he held, the greatest honor and title Bill ever wanted was that of citizen of the Town of Trumbull.

Bill loved Trumbull so much, that his life and his work was within a 1 mile radius of the home that he and Dolores moved to in 1965, where they raised their 3 daughters. Today, we gather in St. Teresa's Church, where Bill was a dedicated parishioner. And after we leave here today, Bill will be laid to rest at Long Hill Cemetery.

Long Hill, the middle of Trumbull - - the heart of the Town, close to the Main Street that Bill loved so much.

It was Main Street in Trumbull where Bill practiced Main Street values in his life's work - at the Long Hill Administration building where he gave 36 ½ years of his life, at the Town Hall where he volunteered his time as a member and Chairman of the Board of Finance, and at the Corner Deli and Marty Kane's, where he would stop for a coffee almost every day and secretly indulge a jelly donut or two, or three, without Dolores finding out.

As intelligent as Bill was, he was also incredibly naïve. And many of us always enjoyed capitalizing on this naiveté with practical jokes. Bill loved to laugh and he enjoyed when people laughed at his expense.

My father recently reminded me of the time that Bill desperately wanted to become a member of the Germanian-Schwaben Club. He was being sponsored by Jerry McDougall. Jerry couldn't resist having some fun at Bill's expense. He told Bill that in addition to submitting his resume and credentials to the nominating committee, Bill would also have to learn how to sing a song in German before the nominating committee. Indeed, Jerry convinced Bill that this would be the only way to gain membership to this distinguished club.

Bill fell for it, hook, line and sinker. Bill immediately contacted Zoltan Toman, a German teacher at Trumbull High School. Over the course of the next several weeks, Bill began studying German, focusing on pronunciation and a song to sing. By the time of his induction, Bill was ready to sing his song. You can imagine Bill's shock, when on the night of his installation he began singing in German to the laughing of those that pulled a fast one on him.

While his friends had fun at Bill's expense, no one had more fun than Bill's wife, Dolores. Dolores was proof positive that behind every good man, was a good woman. When Bill learned that he had an early form of diabetes, he and Dolores were summoned to the doctor's office. Bill learned that he would have to take salt out of his diet. Bill was not a happy camper and refused to give up salt. Dolores however decided to take matters into her own hands. She put covers inside the salt shakers so the salt wouldn't come out. For three years, Bill would pick up the salt shaker and apply salt to his food without realizing that nothing was coming out. This technique worked, as Bill's health improved.

But even though naïve at times, no one could ever match Bill's generosity or his love and devotion to his family and his friends. About ten years ago, one of Bill's friends went into a nursing home. Loyal to a fault, Bill would travel twice a week to Ansonia to visit his friend and have dinner with him. When a member of my family took ill, Bill was one of the first people there. He was a man who would give any friend or any member of his family the shirt off his back and ask for nothing in return.

Bill was one of Trumbull's most dedicated servants. Most are unaware that Bill had been a lifelong Democrat, after casting his first vote for John F. Kennedy in 1960. In 2002, Bill switched to the Republican Party. When Bill made the switch, he was all in. You couldn't ask for a better ally. Bill was respected on both sides of the aisle, because people knew he was a man of intelligence and integrity. In the political arena, Bill was tough, but always gentle. He carried himself as a statesman, while always maintaining his competitive spirit. And while he was always true to his convictions, he was even truer to those that he called his friends.

Bill was a tremendous help to me when I ran for first selectman. He was an advisor, my campaign treasurer and one of my biggest supporters. And today, I say to my friend, thank you, for I would not have attained this office without you.

Bill Crooks was one of the most decent and honest people I have ever met in public life . . . and he often joked that he would have to be honest, with a last name like "Crooks".

The Town of Trumbull is a better place to live, work and raise a family because of Bill Crooks. And each of our lives has been enriched for having known him.

Today, we have lost a great public servant, a great Trumbullite and a great man. And I have lost a dear friend. As Bill Crooks goes his way, we are left with fond memories of the joy and love he shared with so many people. And we look to that fine day when we will see him again, with that big smile and good humor.

Farewell my friend. May God bless you and may you continue to watch over the Town you truly loved.